

REMARKS

Claims 2, 3, 7 and 8 have been amended and remain pending in the application. Claims 4, 5 and 9 have been cancelled. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indicated allowability of claims 4, 5 and 9 if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicants have amended independent claim 2 to incorporate the features of allowed dependent claim 4. Other minor editorial changes were made to incorporate same and avoid redundancies. Hence, Applicants submit claim 2 is now in condition for allowance. Claim 3 has been amended and depends from claim 2 and is also submitted to be allowable.

Similarly, Applicants have amended independent method claim 7 to incorporate the features in allowed dependent claim 9. Again, minor editorial changes have been made to incorporate the same while avoiding redundant recitations. Hence, Applicants submit independent claim 7 is also allowable, along with dependent claim 8.

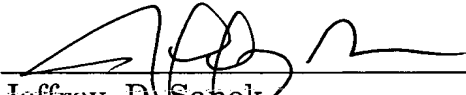
In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit only allowed claims 2-3 and 7-8 remain in the application. A notice of allowance to that effect is earnestly solicited.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket # 951/50213).

Respectfully submitted,

December 23, 2003



Jeffrey D. Sanok
Registration No. 32,169

CROWELL & MORING LLP
Intellectual Property Group
P.O. Box 14300
Washington, DC 20044-4300
Telephone No.: (202) 624-2500
Facsimile No.: (202) 628-8844

JDS:pct
doc #296017